

26 April 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: FILES

SUBJECT: Case 19289 - Senate Subcommittee Hearing Regarding
the Redefection of the TUAPSE Sailors

1. On 20 April 1956, at 11:00 a.m. in Room 424, Senate Office Building, the Internal Security Subcommittee of the US Senate held an open hearing on the circumstances surrounding the return of five of the TUAPSE sailors to the USSR. Senator Walker presided; Senator Jenner was also present.

2. The first witness to be called was Jan Van Hoogstraten, Immigration Director for Church World Services. At no time during the questioning was [redacted] mentioned by name. Van Hoogstraten merely [redacted] the [redacted] from the govern-

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The committee asked Van Hoogstraten to explain Church World Services involvement in this case. Van Hoogstraten stated that at first Church World Services was responsible for resettling all nine sailors but three of them had "gone over to the government." He made it very clear that Church World Services had assumed responsibility only for resettling these boys and that anything occurring out of the ordinary after their entry into the US was the responsibility of the US government. He stated that at 3:30 p.m. on 6 April he was called by a man from a US government agency who advised him that something was "cooking" with the boys. At this point, Van Hoogstraten interjected that he had always had a most cordial relationship with this government agent and that this agent had carried out his duties in an efficient manner. After Van Hoogstraten had been advised in detail of the impending return of the five sailors to the USSR and had been warned to consider this matter confidential, he told the agent that he wanted to talk with the boys at the airport before they left the next day. The government agent told him to be at the airport at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, 7 April. The next morning this man telephoned again to say that Van Hoogstraten's presence at the airport would not be necessary. Van Hoogstraten said, "Are you going to be there?" "No," was the reply. Then Van Hoogstraten asked, "Have bigger people than we taken this in their hands?" The government man said he guessed so. Van Hoogstraten went to the airport of his own volition but was not permitted to see the boys. He was asked by the committee if he thought anything was left undone in this case which should have been done to prevent the prestige of the US from being damaged. Van Hoogstraten replied that he could not judge because such things were in the hands of the US government but he could not believe that the same government which admitted the sailors several months previously would let them go so easily. Senator Walker asked, "From your view of these boys, who were in my opinion sent away, were they happy to be leaving?"

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Van Hoogstraten said the boys did not speak to him and pretended not to see him. He felt they wanted to protect him from embarrassment. Senator Welker remarked that the purpose of this hearing was to bring this case out in public so that the American people could see just what the Soviets can do right here in the US. Van Hoogstraten read a letter into the record from Church World Services which reiterated his theme that it had been agreed when the boys first entered the US that Church World Services would only be concerned with the general welfare of the boys. The letter also said that Van Hoogstraten was not authorized to answer questions which involved US policy in this case.

3. Viktor Solovyev, the only other witness, testified substantially as is indicated in the attached newspaper clipping from The New York Times, dated 21 April 1956. At one point in his testimony Solovyev volunteered information regarding his whereabouts after the five had redefected. During his discourse in Russian he mentioned Baltimore. The interpreter started to explain what he had said but was interrupted by a member of the committee who stated that he had been taken there for his personal safety and it would not be necessary to put this in the record. In thanking Solovyev for appearing before the committee, Senator Welker stated he expected to go into the matter of the sailors' redefection as fully and completely as possible.

4. In my opinion the testimony of the two witnesses did not differ from the information on this incident already known by this office. Solovyev did not seem especially nervous and was quite sure of himself. He treated what might happen to him if he returned to Russia as a joke. His remark regarding his desire for a gun met with laughter from both the committee and Solovyev himself. An executive session had been held prior to this public hearing and the committee knew exactly when to stop Solovyev when it felt he might reveal something which should be left unsaid for security reasons.

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Enclosure: As stated above.

KMC